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AUTHOR	Foster, Cheryl
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ABSTRACT

This module is designed to help the Child Development Associate (CDA) intern view early childhood programs in relationship to the community as a whole. Objectives are stipulated, activities for achieving each objective are suggested, and an assessment checklist is provided. A study guide emphasized (1) the importance of community understanding and support for the program, (2) teachers' role in helping citizens become acquainted with their center and its purposes, (3) community political structure, (4) linking up with community businesses and groups which may provide valuable help and services, (5) professional agencies which provide services to parents, (6) community information resources, (7) teaching children about the functions of the center staff, (8) teaching children about how their community works, and (9) field trips as a way to extend the range of children's experience of their community. Resources for further study are listed.

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Competency Based Training Module #12

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AND THE COMMUNITY

by

Cheryl Foster

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NOTE TO THE INTERN:

This CDA training module has been prepared as a guide for you and your CDA Advisor to help you to develop certain practical skills necessary for your work in an early childhood center. Although it contains many useful ideas, it is not intended to be a self-study program. Many decisions about your training experiences are left up to you and your CDA Advisor. The activities given in this module are "suggested" activities, and should be used if they are appropriate to your learning needs. You or your Advisor may come up with other activities more appropriate for your particular situation, children, or background of experience and training.

Your Advisor will evaluate your performance in each of the objectives. S/he may do so right away on the basis of skills you already have, or s/he may evaluate you after you have done some learning activities, or both. If you think you already have the skills required by some of the objectives, you should ask to be evaluated right away. You may not have to do any activities for some of the objectives. You do, however, have to demonstrate the required skills for your advisor; you cannot just tell s/him that you have the skills. If your advisor has already observed some of the skills before you entered this module, s/he may check you off on those skills without further observation.

When your Advisor has evaluated your performance in an objective area as satisfactory, s/he will initial and date that objective as completed in your copy of this module. When all of the objectives have been initialled, you have completed the requirements of this module and have earned credit. Keep this module as your permanent record of completion, and as a reference to use in your classroom.

As you can see, how fast you are able to complete this module depends on a lot of things: how much time and effort you can put into it; how much help your Advisor can give you; how much experience and training you have already had.

The Arizona/Nevada HSST/CDA Program hopes that you find your participation in CDA a valuable and practical training experience. We would appreciate any suggestions you may have for improvements in the training program and in this module.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AND THE COMMUNITY

CDA TRAINING MODULE #12

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This Module relates to the following CDA Functional Areas:

12 - Home Center

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THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AND THE COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

Schools do not exist as an agency apart from the community. Schools and communities need to support each other so that the children's needs are adequately met. Cooperation of schools and other community resources will lead to better human relationships within that community.

The early childhood center can easily be pictured within this framework of school-community cooperation. When teachers, parents, community leaders, service agencies, and all citizens of a locale give of themsleves or their agency to help the others, then everyone can grow and benefit, most importantly the children.

The purpose of this module is to help the CDA Intern view the early childhood program of the center in relationship to the community as a whole. Is the center being supported by the community? Is the community being supported by the center? Are the children becoming acquainted with the people who keep things functioning in their environment?

OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, ASSESSMENT

CDA Intern's Name_____

Date of Entry_____Date of Completion_____

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
1. The Intern will discuss the dependent relationship between center and community. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	1. Read Section I of the Study Guide. Discuss the following with your Advisor: a. How can the center and the community help each other function at the most effective level? b. How is the center vitally related to the community?
2. The Intern will acquaint the citizens of the community with the center and its purposes. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	2. Read Section II of the Study Guide and answer the following: a. How are you utilizing parents within your program? b. Are you allowing parents to assist you in informing others in the community about the center? c. What avenues are open to you to share the children's activities with the community? d. Evaluate those mentioned in c. above with your Advisor.
3. The Intern will discuss the political and social strata of the community. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	3. Read Section III of the Study Guide. Discuss the specific hierachy with your Advisor and the particular benefit this information could have for you.
4. The Intern will become familiar with the community businesses and groups that could become sources of help for the center. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	4. Read Section IV of the Study Guide. Keep a record of these as you find out about places and groups that want to help the center.

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
5. The Intern will be aware of and use the referral agencies that are available within the community. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	5. Read Section V of the Study Guide. a. List the agencies that are available to you and the parents. b. List several occasions where you have used or have referred parents to such agencies. c. List additional cases where these agencies could be of help to your families.
6. The Intern will acquaint parents with the library facilities available in the community. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	6. Read Section VI of the Study Guide. a. List the library facilities that are are available within your community and share this information with the parents. b. List some cases when a book or an article could possibly benefit a parent. c. Establish a lending library (including children's books) at your center.
7. The Intern will acquaint the children with those who function in the immediate center environment. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	7. Read Section VII of the Study Guide. a. List the personnel at your center. b. Plan activities which will better acquaint the children with these people. c. Evaluate such activities with your Advisor.
8. The Intern will acquaint the children with the people who keep their community functioning. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	8. Read Section VIII of the Study Guide. a. Discuss with your Advisor: - How do children show that they are interested in the community around them? - How can you build upon their interest? b. List those parents who could and would visit the classroom to share something concerning their work. c. Study the possibility of visiting a parent's place of work, or one of the children's homes.

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
	d. List other possible classroom visitors; those whose occupation or hobby can be a source of enrichment to the classroom program.
	e. Plan and carry out program activities centered around community workers.
	f. Evaluate those activities in e. above with your Advisor. What values have been realized? How can you improve this part of your classroom program?
9. The Intern will effectively plan, carry out, and do follow-up on a field trip into the community.	9. Read Section IX of the Study Guide.
	a. Refer to Module #19.
	b. Keep an up-dated list of possible field trips appropriate to your classroom program.
ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	c. Decide on a specific field trip, and plan and prepare for it according to recommended procedures.
	d. After the field trip has been taken, do follow-up activities and then evaluate this entire process with your Advisor.
10. The Intern will make an implementation plan, stating how the skills and information gained through completing this Module will be incorporated into on-going teaching.	10. Review with your Advisor the new skills you have gained in planning and providing experiences to bring the community and your center closer together. Make an implementation plan, answering these questions:
ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	a. What skills will you use in your regular teaching?
	b. What schedule will you use, incorporating these new skills (how often will you use the new activities and skills)?
	c. When do you want to review your implementation progress with your Advisor?
	Insert your implementation plan into your CDA Portfolio and refer to it periodically to check your own progress.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AND THE COMMUNITY

STUDY GUIDE

I. Community understanding and support is important for every school or center.

A. The school is of value to the community and needs its support.

1. A community that does good planning in the direction of ensuring adequate facilities to meet the recreational and religious needs of all people also values its schools.

2. To the extent that a community fails to plan well, it handicaps the school in carrying out its functions.

B. The home and the school share responsibility to work for the betterment of the community.

1. Teachers and parents can support the positive advances that are occuring in the community.

2. Schools can also give leadership in identifying and working for other improvements in local communities.

C. The early childhood center should have its roots in the community.

1. The cultural aspects of the community should be reflected in the program of the center.

2. Parents should share in making decisions about the program itself.

II. Teachers need to help citizens become acquainted with their center and with its purposes. (Also see Module #11)

A. Parent involvement paves the way for wide community support and better human relationships within the community.

B. Let parents help interpret the needs and goals of the center to the community.

C. Give parents and other citizens in the community an opportunity to see what the center is doing.

1. Use group meetings to help explain the goals of the center to the community.

2. Offer open-house type situations or other special programs to share the children's activities and display the children's work.

3. When feasible, display the work of the children at community business places, or at a community fair or other event.

4. Such exposure to the goals of the center and to the activities that the children are involved in helps the community become aware of the value of the center.

III. It is helpful for a teacher to be aware of those people who are community leaders.

A. Good public relations are fostered when teachers are familiar with the people who are influential in community affairs.

B. A knowledge of the political structure of the community facilitates closer cooperation between center and community.

IV. A teacher needs to become familiar with the various community businesses and groups that would like to offer their help and services to the center program and to the children.

A. Would they willingly offer financial help?

B. Would they like to help furnish objects and materials for the center program?

C. Ask parents to help keep you informed about those groups who would like to be of help to the center.

V. What professional agencies are available in the community to help parents with situations that are not within your domain as a teacher?

A. Recognize your own limits; realize that you cannot be expected to solve all of the problems of the parents.

B. Acquaint yourself with agencies in the community so that you can refer parents to persons who are better qualified in a particular area:

1. Medical health services.

2. Dental health services.

3. Mental health services.

4. Special education resources.

5. Social workers.

6. Legal counseling.

VI. Are there any community facilities that handle books that would be interesting and helpful to the parents?

A. Is there a library or bookmobile available to the parents in the community?

B. Would it be possible to work with community facilities to set up a library for parents in your classroom?

C. Could you combine your professional resources and personal books with those at the center to establish a lending library?

VII. Help the children in your classroom become acquainted with the people who keep things functioning in their immediate center environment (emphasize the importance of each one of these people in relation to the center activities):

A. Examples:

1. All classroom aides including volunteer parent helpers.

2. Bus driver.

3. Janitor.

4. Cook.

5. Nurse.

B. Invite these people to talk with the children about their role in the classroom program demonstrating activities or doing activities with the children when appropriate.

VIII. Help the children in your classroom become acquainted with the people who keep things functioning in the community around them (in addition to center personnel).

A. Children live in a community and want to understand it.

1. In dramatic play they include roles of the people in the community as well as family roles.

2. A teacher helps by talking over questions of interest, using books, stories, and pictures, and by giving real experiences with these people as a basis for better understanding the roles of people in a society.

B. Children can learn about community workers and classroom experiences can be enriched by having visitors come to the center or by taking trips to see them at their places of work within the community.

1. Classroom themes can be greatly enriched by seeking out those people in the community who will share their skills and talents with the children.

2. Meeting them, talking to them, and watching them do their work will help the children better understand community services.

3. Talking about what they do and re-enacting the role in play, later, will help stabilize the ideas in the minds of the children.

C. Parents can play a vital role in helping the children at your center learn about the community around them.

1. A father or mother may bring the tools he or she uses or a product he or she makes.

2. It may be possible to arrange a trip to places where parents work or in some cases to the homes of the children.

IX. Field trips can be valuable opportunities for children to extend the range of their experiences and to get to know their community.

A. Make use of the experiences that your community offers, visiting places that are within the range of the children's comprehension.

1. Keep in mind that children learn most when they can relate the unfamiliar to something they know (they get the most satisfaction out of simple experiences which they can see closely and, if possible, touch the things they see).

2. Always visit the place first to make certain that it is a suitable place for learning.

a. Know the hazards that may be there and how to guard against them.

b. Prepare the people there by making sure that they know what to expect from young children.

3. Prepare the children for what to expect.

a. What will it be like?

b. What will they do?

c. What will they see?

d. Will they hear a noise?

B. Any instructions or prohibitions should be clearly stated before the children start, so that both children and adults who are accompanying you will understand clearly what the rules are.

1. Have enough adults along to make the trip of real value.

a. There should always be two adults on every trip when there are more than three or four children.

b. There should be enough adults present so that each child feels secure and free to explore at his own pace.

c. Many times parents are able and eager to help with trips and with transportation on trips.

2. On most trips there will be some children who will want more time than others to satisfy their special curiosity about some aspect of the experience (one more reason for having several adults along).

3. Plan the trip so that it does not become an overtiring experience for the children.

C. Use follow-up activities such as talking about what they saw, an art or craft activity, or role playing to help the children get the most from the excursion.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Baker, Katherine Read. IDEAS THAT WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. Washington, D.C.: National Association for Education of Young Children, 1972, P. 200.

2. Pitcher, Evelyn and others. HELPING YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Co., 1974. P. 11.

3. Read, Katherine H. THE NURSERY SCHOOL: A HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS LABORATORY. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1971.

4. Taylor, Katharine Whiteside. PARENTS AND CHILDREN LEARN TOGETHER. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1967.

5. THE CDA PROGRAM: A GUIDE FOR TRAINING. Department of Health, Education and Walfare, Office of Child Development, 1973, P. 15.